1: Hollis G-5 (ca. 1894-1904) 1905
FL12 Masai FL12

INTRODUCTION

THE present work, by Mr. Hollis, Chief Secretary to the Administration of the East Africa Protectorate, treats of the language, traditions, and customs of the Masai, one of the most interesting and important tribes of those territories. I am not competent—and there must be few people in the world who are—to criticize by the light of independent knowledge the mass of material which he has brought together, and will merely attempt briefly to summarize the information about the race which we now possess. Mr. Hollis's previous contributions to anthropology, his opportunities for studying and daily conversing with the Masai, and his linguistic talents, which are well known to every one in East Africa, are a sufficient guarantee for the thoroughness and excellence of his work.

The Masai at present inhabit the inland districts of British and German East Africa from the equator to about 6° S. Few of them are found north of the Line, except an isolated settlement just south of Lake Rudolf, and they seem to avoid both the sea and the great central lakes. Many smaller pieces of water, such as Lakes Naivasha and Nakuru, are found in their haunts, but they neither use boats nor catch fish. They are divided at present into two sections, one of which, called 'L-Oikop, is agricultural and settled, while the other, or Masai proper, is entirely pastoral and nomadic. The difference between the two is evidently not ancient, for both speak practically the same language, and it is probable that the agriculturalists of the present time are nomads who have settled down. On the other hand, tradition does not carry the history of the tribe further back than a century at the most[1], and it would be rash to assume that the nomad pastoral state is primitive or very ancient. It is quite probable that there was a large agricultural settlement on the Uasin-Gishu plateau from which the more adventurous warriors detached themselves.

In East Africa the Masai are clearly distinguished by their language, customs, and appearance from the Bantu races (although the latter often imitate them, and have received a certain proportion of Masai blood), and equally clearly

[1] The genealogy of the medicine men goes back about 200 years.

13:Huntingford E-4 (no date) 1953 FL12 Masai FL12
Agricultural Masai

In 1932 the Il-Tiamus numbered about 2,250 (3,423 according to the 1948 Census), and though they are of Masai stock, being descended from a Sambur section called Il-Doigio, they have admitted a variety of refugees including Kamasya, and become rather mixed. According to von Höhnel they had originally four villages at the south end of Lake Baringo, but two were deserted on account of Masai and Suk raids, and some of the inhabitants, having lost all their cattle, took refuge on Kokua Island in Lake Baringo. They are expert swimmers and possess canoes, though von Höhnel saw none in 1887. Their dwellings are round huts with rather high-pitched and somewhat convex thatched roofs, and walls of posts and sticks. These are crowded into two permanent villages known as "Njempa Kubwa" and "Njempa Nduga" in the Tigrish valley a few miles south of Lake Baringo; the closely packed huts almost touch each other, and the mud-walled granaries are surrounded by strong palisades.

In general the Il-Tiamus keep as close as they can to the dress and customs of the pastoral Masai; they have circumcision and *eunoto* and other ceremonies, and practise the "free-love" system of the pastoralists, though without the *manyatas*. Today they have some 180,000 acres of poor land, most of it unfit for cultivation; but they have acquired, since the establishment of British rule, some 12,000 or more head of cattle, and 30,000 goats and sheep, thus achieving in part the ambition of all Il-Oikop to become cattle people again. In the time of Thomson and Teleki, however, Njempa was an important station on the caravan route, and von Höhnel noted that they had a large extent of cultivated land. This was divided into blocks (he says of three to four miles square) which were intersected by irrigation channels bringing water from dams across the river Tigrish. This system was still working in Dundas's time, who says that the opening of the main ditch was performed with the sacrifice of a sheep at the mouth of the ditch.[13] Besides agriculture, the Il-Tiamus fished and hunted, using the bow, and spears of Suk and Turkana types.

It is possible that the fishing group called Il-Molo who live on the east shore of Lake Rudolf is to be classed as Il-Oikop.[14] They subsist on a diet of fish alone which, when Teleki and von Höhnel saw them in 1888, had produced no ill-effects; but it seems now to have resulted in considerable physical degeneration, and in the appearance of rickets in all members of the group. There seems to be a good deal of Gelaba blood in them.

The Il-Arusa round Mount Meru are a large tribe of agricultural Masai, originally of Bantu stock, but now accepted by the pastoral Masai as worthy of recognition as a group which can pay and receive cattle for compensation in cases of homicide. The Baraguyu in Southern Masailand are also to be classed as agricultural Masai.[14]

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE

Social Organization

Life Cycle

From birth to circumcision a male is a boy, *ol-ayioni*. At circumcision[15] he enters an age-set and becomes a warrior, *ol-murrani*, "one who is circumcised," and may associate with unmarried girls. At the *ol-gesher* ceremony he becomes an elder, *ol-moruo*. Warriors may marry when they become senior warriors. After the *ol-gesher* the newly made elders attend to their family concerns, and get wives

[13] K. R. Dundas, *JRAI*, XL, pp. 49–53.
[14] W. S. Dyson and V. E. Fuchs, "The Elmolo," *JRAI*, 1937, LXVII, p. 327; von Höhnel, II, pp. 138–40.
[14] The people known as WaMeru in northern Tanganyika are not Masai, but people of Bantu stock who have imitated them.
[15] There is some uncertainty as to the age at which boys are circumcised. Hollis gives the limits as 13–17 years; Fosbrooke gives the lower limit as 16 or 17.